
3 Nephi 18 — That Ye Do Always Remember Me — The Sacrament and the Covenant of Presence

3 Nephi 18: Jesus institutes the sacrament. He commands his disciples to bring bread and wine; he takes the bread, breaks and blesses it, gives it to the twelve, and has them give it to the multitude until all are filled — 'this shall ye do in remembrance of my body, which I have shown unto you... that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you.' He gives them the wine likewise, 'in remembrance of my blood, which I have shed for you.' To do these things is to be 'built upon my rock'; to do more or less is to build on sand, and the gates of hell stand open. He charges them to watch and pray always, lest the devil tempt them and lead them captive — for Satan desires to sift them as wheat; to pray always to the Father in his name; to pray in their families; to meet together oft and forbid no one from coming to their meetings, but to pray for all. He sets the example: 'I am the light; I have set an example for you.' He commands that none partake of his flesh and blood unworthily, yet that even the unworthy not be cast out but ministered to and prayed for, that they may return and be healed. To the twelve he gives power to give the Holy Ghost, touching them one by one. Then a cloud overshadows the multitude, and he ascends into heaven. The chapter is the institution of the sacrament — the bread and the cup, the perpetual covenant of remembrance, the promise that those who always remember him shall always have his Spirit — and the close of the first day of the Lord's ministry, sealed with the gift of the Holy Ghost and his ascension into heaven.

This is the chapter where the risen Lord gives his people the ordinance they will keep until he comes again — the sacrament of the bread and the cup — and binds it to a promise that is among the most precious in all of scripture: *if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you* (v. 7). The whole chapter turns on that exchange. The sacrament is, at its heart, a covenant of *remembrance*, and the reward of remembrance is *presence* — the abiding companionship of the Spirit of Christ. The Lord who has just spent a day teaching, healing, and blessing the children now gives them the means to keep him *with* them after he ascends: a simple meal of bread and wine, eaten *in remembrance*, that opens the door to his Spirit. The chapter is the institution of the sacrament and the close of the first day of the visit — and it ends, fittingly, with the gift of the Holy Ghost and the ascension of the Lord into heaven.

Hebrew Word Studies

kos (כוס) — "cup" — kos, a cup or drinking vessel; in scripture a rich symbol with two opposite faces: the cup of wrath and suffering that the wicked (or the substitute) must drink, and the cup of blessing and salvation that the redeemed lift in thanksgiving. The same vessel can hold judgment or joy vv. 8–11 (take of the wine of the cup and drink of it... in remembrance of my blood, which I have shed for you). The cup of the sacrament — the wine of the cup the disciples drink in remembrance — gathers up one of the most powerful double-images in all of scripture, the Hebrew kos, "cup." For the cup, in the Bible, has two utterly opposite faces, and the gospel is the story of how the one became the other. On one face, the cup is the cup of wrath, the cup of suffering and judgment that must be drunk to the dregs. *In the hand of the Lord there is a cup (kos)... and the wicked of the earth shall... drink them* (Ps. 75:8). *Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup (kos) of his fury* (Isa. 51:17). To drink the cup is to receive the full measure of judgment poured out. And this is the cup the Lord himself names in Gethsemane: *O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup (poterion) pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt* (Matt. 26:39) — the cup of the world's sin and the Father's wrath, which Christ shrank from but did not refuse. It is the very cup he names in 3 Nephi 11:11 at his descent: *I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me*. On the other face, the cup is the cup of salvation, the cup of blessing and thanksgiving lifted by the redeemed. *I will take the cup (kos) of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord* (Ps. 116:13). *My cup (kos) runneth over* (Ps. 23:5) — the overflowing cup of God's abundance. The cup of joy, of blessing, of covenant fellowship at the table of the Lord. Now hold these two faces together, because the sacrament is the place where they meet. *Christ drank the cup of wrath* — the bitter cup of suffering and judgment, the cup of the world's sin — *so that his people might drink the cup of blessing*. He took the cup of fury to its dregs at the cross so that the cup he hands his disciples is now the cup of salvation, the cup of the new covenant in his blood, the cup of remembrance and joy. The same vessel — the cup — is transformed by the cross: the cup of wrath that he drank becomes the cup of blessing that we drink. This is why Paul calls it *the cup of blessing which we bless* (1 Cor. 10:16), and why the Lord could say of the Last Supper cup, *this cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you* (Luke 22:20). The disciples in Bountiful drink *in remembrance of my blood, which I have shed for you* (v. 11) — and the *shedding* of that blood was the draining of the bitter cup, so that what remains for them is the cup of the covenant, the cup of his presence. Every time the disciple drinks the sacramental cup, then, he is remembering the great exchange: that Christ drank the cup of wrath so that we might drink the cup of blessing; that the bitter cup he could not be spared became the cup of salvation he hands to us. The cup of judgment, emptied by the Lord, is refilled with mercy and passed to his people. And the promise attached to the cup is *presence* — *if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you* (v. 11) — so that the cup of remembrance is also the cup of communion, the vessel by which, drinking in remembrance, the disciple receives the abiding Spirit of the One who drank the bitter cup dry. *My cup runneth over* — because his cup was drained to the dregs.

From the Chapter's Architecture

```cross-references Luke 22:19–20 (*this do in remembrance of me... this cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you — the institution of the sacrament*, vv. 7, 11); 1 Cor. 11:23–29 (*as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death... whosoever shall eat... unworthily... eateth and drinketh damnation to himself — the worthy and unworthy partaking*, vv. 28–29); 1 Cor. 10:16 (*the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? — the cup of the covenant*, vv. 8–11); Ps. 116:13 (*I will take the cup — kos — of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord — the cup of blessing*, vv. 8–11); Ps. 75:8; Isa. 51:17, 22 (*the cup — kos — of fury the Lord drinks for his people — the bitter cup of 3 Ne. 11:11, vv. 8–11; Matt. 26:39 (let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt — the bitter cup Christ drank that we might drink the cup of blessing); Luke 22:31 (Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat — the sifting of v. 18); Acts 1:9–11 (Christ taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight — the ascension*, vv. 38–39); Deut. 8:11–18 (*beware that thou forget not the Lord — the forgetting the sacrament remedies*, v. 7); Hel. 5:9–12; Alma 37:13 (*O remember, remember — the covenant of remembrance the sacrament embodies*, v. 7); 3 Ne. 11:14–15 (*the body shown unto you, the wounds touched — remembered in the bread*, v. 7); Moro. 4–5 (*the sacramental prayers — that they may always remember him, and have his Spirit to be with them, the fulfillment of v. 7*). ```